(a) whether there has been any recent increase in the airport tax or FTT on international passengers;

(b) if so, the extent of increase indicating the reasons therefor and the amount per passenger that is payable now;

(c) whether the Government have received any representations to withdraw the increase in Airport tax/FTT;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;

(e) whether the standards and facilities at Airports are proposed to be increased;

(f) if so, the details of such proposals at each Airport; and

(g) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to reduce this tax and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) The Foreign Travel Tax has been increased with effect from 26th September, 1997 from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 750/- per passenger embarking on a journey to countries other than the neighbouring countries. The last increase was made in the year 1989 and the present increase has been made to keep pace with the allround increase in the costs associated with the foreign travel.

(c) to (g) The Government have received representations from various individuals and Associations, and they have been examined. There is no proposal under consideration to reduce this tax.

(e) and (f) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

Smuggled Goods and Foreign Currency

503. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and amount of smuggled goods and foreign currency seized by Customs officials and other agencies during each of the last three years till date, State-wise;

(b) the number of arrests made in each case; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the entry of smuggled goods and foreign currency in the country in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Vacant Posts of CMDs

504. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of CMD's and Directors lying vacant in the subsidiary companies under Coal India Limited and Neyveli Lignite Corporation and since when these vacancies are lying vacant;

(b) the reasons for not filling these vacancies;

(c) whether officers joining as DIC's retire after years of service as such without being regular specially in Mahanadi Coal Fields;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b) The position regarding vacancies in board level posts in CIL subsidiaries and NLC Limited is indicated below:—

	Name of Post	Date of Vacancy	Reasons thereof
1.	Dir (Fin) NLC	1.3.96	Approval of the competent authority is awaite.
2.	CMD, MCL	1.12.96	
3.	CMD, SECL	1.2.97	
4.	CMD, CCL	31.10.97	Recommendations of the competent authority for empanelment awaited.
5.	Dir (Tech), CMPDIL	27.9.96	
6.	Dir (Tech), NCL	18.12.96	
7.	Dir (Tech), BCCL	1.7.97	
8.	Dir (Tech), CCL	1.8.97	
9.	Dir (Tech), ECL	31.8.97	
10.	Dir (Tech), WCL	31.10.97	
11.	Dir (Fin), MCL	18.9.97	
12.	Dir (Tech.), CMPDIL	19.11.97	
13.	Dir (Per), MCL	18.9.97	Approval of the competent authority awaited.
14.	DIR (P&P), NLC	1.10.97	